

The Prevention and Management of Psychological Injuries: An Evidence-Based Approach

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Mental Health of the Australian Workforce

Epidemiological estimates suggest that up to 14.9% of Australians in paid employment will experience a diagnosable psychological/psychiatric disorder during their working lives.

Likely to be a 'high incidence' disorder
(most common in general community):
Anxiety, Depression, Substance Abuse

These disorders may potentially:

- manifest in the workplace without any work contribution;
- be contained through appropriate treatment and not apparent;
- be accelerated by work factors;
- be aggravated by work factors.

The Issue of Major Depression in Australia

In 1990 Depression was the fourth leading cause of disability (disease-burden) worldwide.

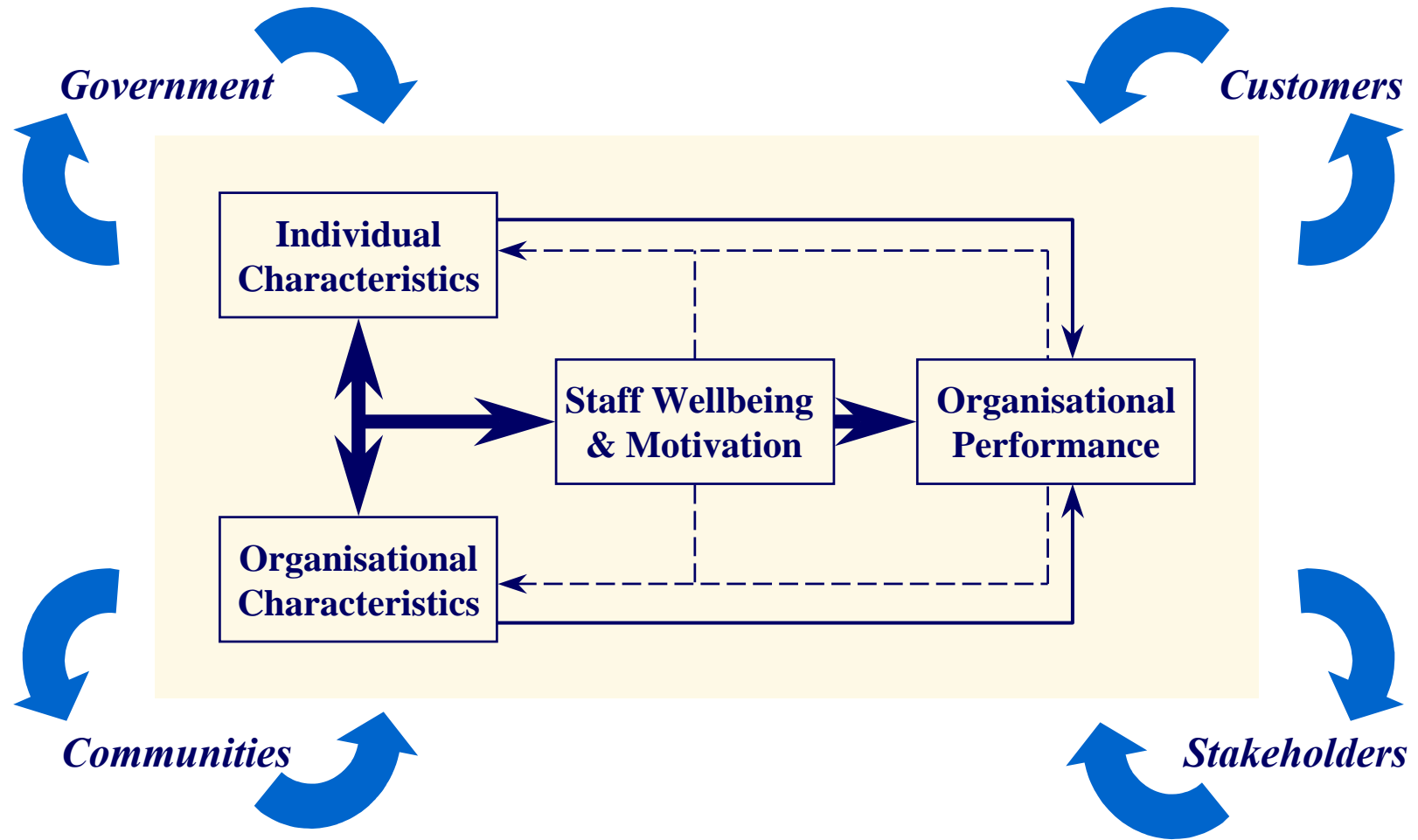
Currently in Australia, Depression is the second leading cause of disability, after heart-related illness.

The World Health Organisation estimates that by 2020, Depression will become the 'single leading cause' of disability worldwide.

- Up to one in five people will experience Depression during their adult lives.**
- Depression occurs most often in women aged 18-24 years.**
- Depression occurs most often in men aged 35-44 years.**
- Impact on productivity: Individuals experiencing Depression take up to 4 days off work each month – 2 million+ working days lost each year.**

Overall population rates of depression slightly increasing BUT older people experiencing less depression and young people experiencing more depression.

Organisational Health



Information on Organisational Health

Through a range of scientific and commercial projects, we have examined the key drivers of organisational health with data from over 500,000 employees world-wide.

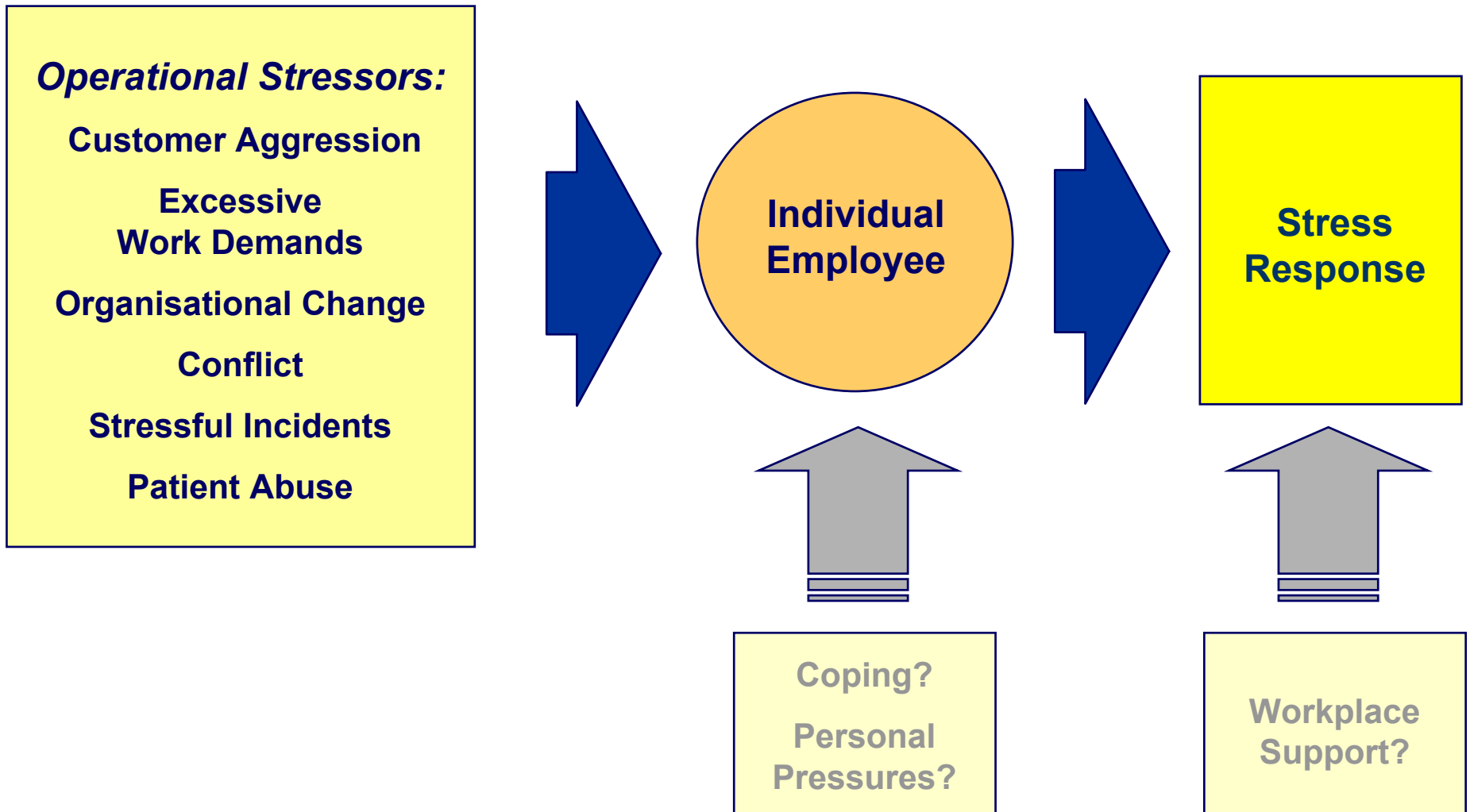
Public Sector

Accountants and Economists
Community Services Workers
Emergency Services Workers
Hospital Staff
Local Government Employees
Police Officers
Primary & Secondary Teachers
Administrative Staff
Transport Workers

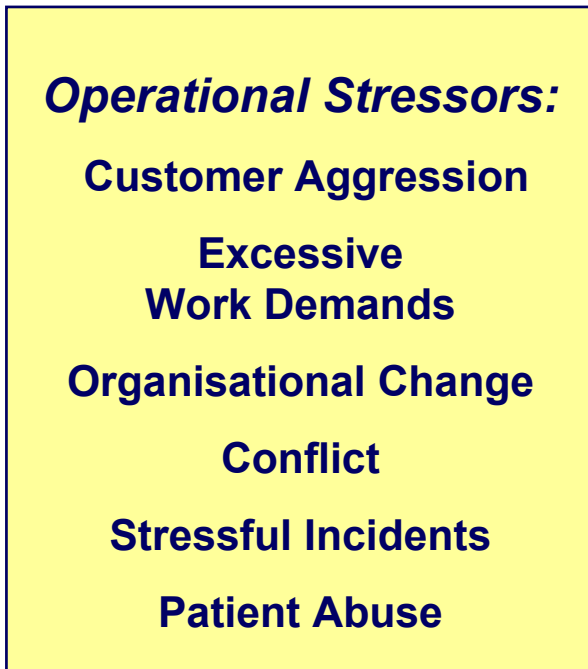
Private Sector

Airline Employees
Engineering Employees
Finance Sector Employees
Information Technology Employees
Insurance Employees
Resource Industry Employees
Retail Employees
Telecommunications Employees
Utilities Employees

Focus on Operational Stressors?



Focus on Operational Stressors?



The correlation between exposure to specific operational stressors and (a) the individual employee stress response and (b) submission of workers compensation claims is approximately zero.

The Emerging Prevention Evidence-Base

Recent Australian research involving large cohorts of private and public sector employees has consistently shown that:

The net impact of operational stressors on employee wellbeing outcomes and psychological injury claims is mediated by a number of other more primary drivers.

Research Evidence in the Public Sector

Workers' Compensation

Emotionality	50
Individual Morale	32
Organisational Climate	-28
Individual Distress	-20
Operational Stressors	12
Emotion Focused Coping	12
Positive Work Experiences	-11
Workplace Morale	11

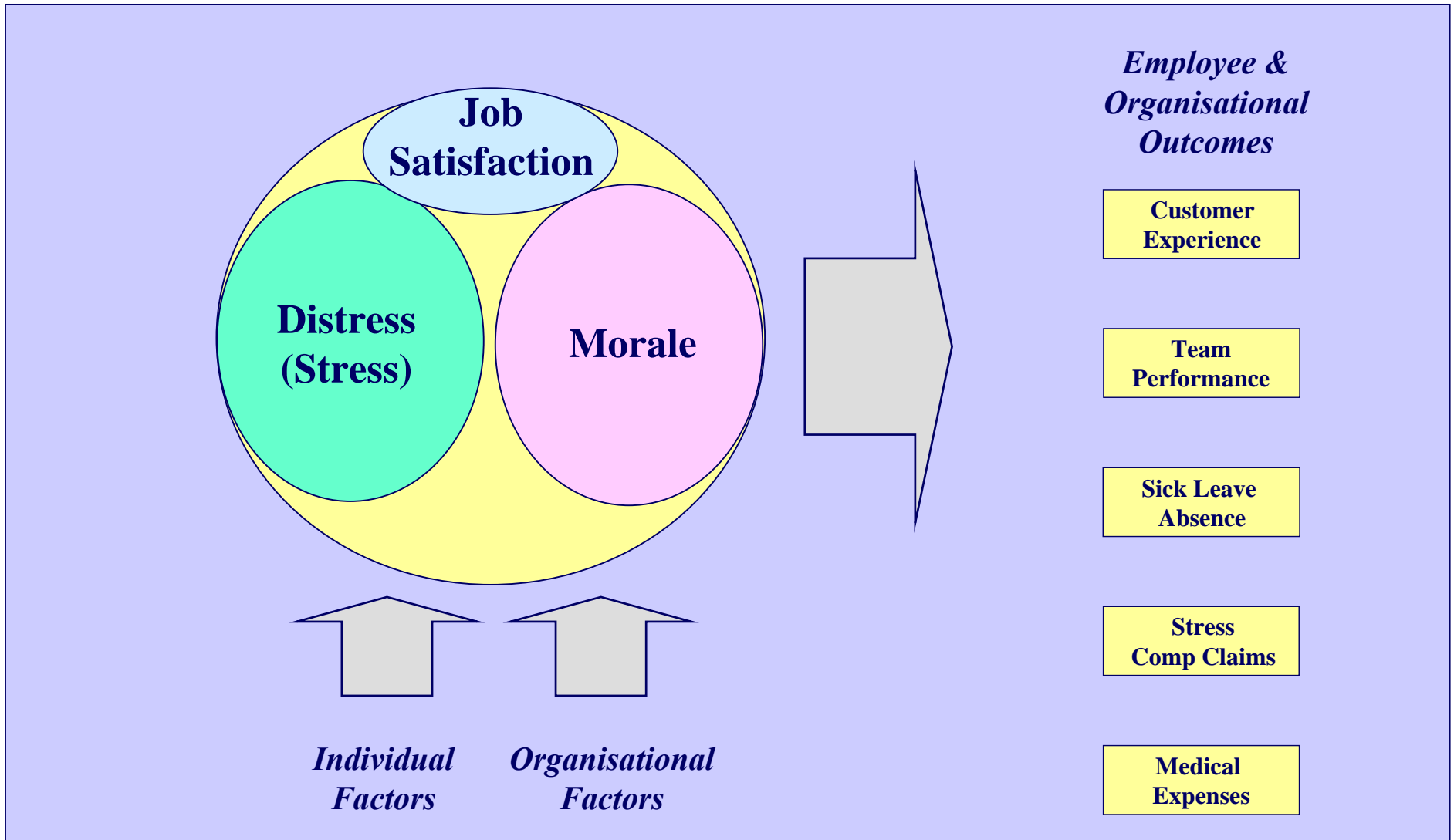
Noncertified Sick leave

Organisational Climate	-19
Job Satisfaction	-16
Emotionality	11
Workplace Distress	11
Operational Stressors	06
Positive Work Experiences	-06

Turnover Intentions

Emotionality	40
Organisational Climate	-39
Individual Morale	-34
Individual Distress	22
Positive Work Experiences	-14
Operational Stressors	13
Workplace Morale	-10
Sociability	09
Job Satisfaction	-06

The Structure of Occupational Wellbeing



Key Drivers of Staff Motivation & Wellbeing

<i>Workgroup Morale</i>		<i>Workgroup Distress</i>		<i>Individual Morale</i>		<i>Individual Distress</i>	
Supportive Leadership	74	Excessive Work Demands	66	Supportive Leadership	52		
Coworker Interaction	74	Supportive Leadership	-60	Role Clarity	48	Supportive Leadership	-42
Role Clarity	45	Goal Alignment	-41	Employee Development	30	Role Clarity	-41
Goal Alignment	39	Participative Decision-Making	-19	Participative Decision-Making	16	Excessive Work Demands	30
Participative Decision-Making	15	Individual Morale	-14	Coworker Interaction	13		
		Role Clarity	-18	Appraisal & Recognition	12		

Summary of Key Drivers of Psychological Injury Claims

MAJOR DRIVERS:

- ***Levels of Supportive Leadership***
- ***Levels of Individual Morale***
- ***Overall Quality of Work Team Climate***
(i.e., support, clarity, engagement & learning processes)
- ***Individual Employee Susceptibility***
(i.e., levels of trait resilience & emotional reactivity)

MINOR DRIVERS:

- ***Operational Stressors***

Supportive Leadership

Other Leadership & Managerial Behaviours:

Managing Core Business

- establishes clear goals & priorities
- communicates a clear vision for the future
- effective project management
- focus on strategic context
- values quality
- encourages innovation

Managing People

- encourages feedback
- builds internal & external relationships
- demonstrates personal integrity
- values ethical behaviour
- manages change effectively

Developing People

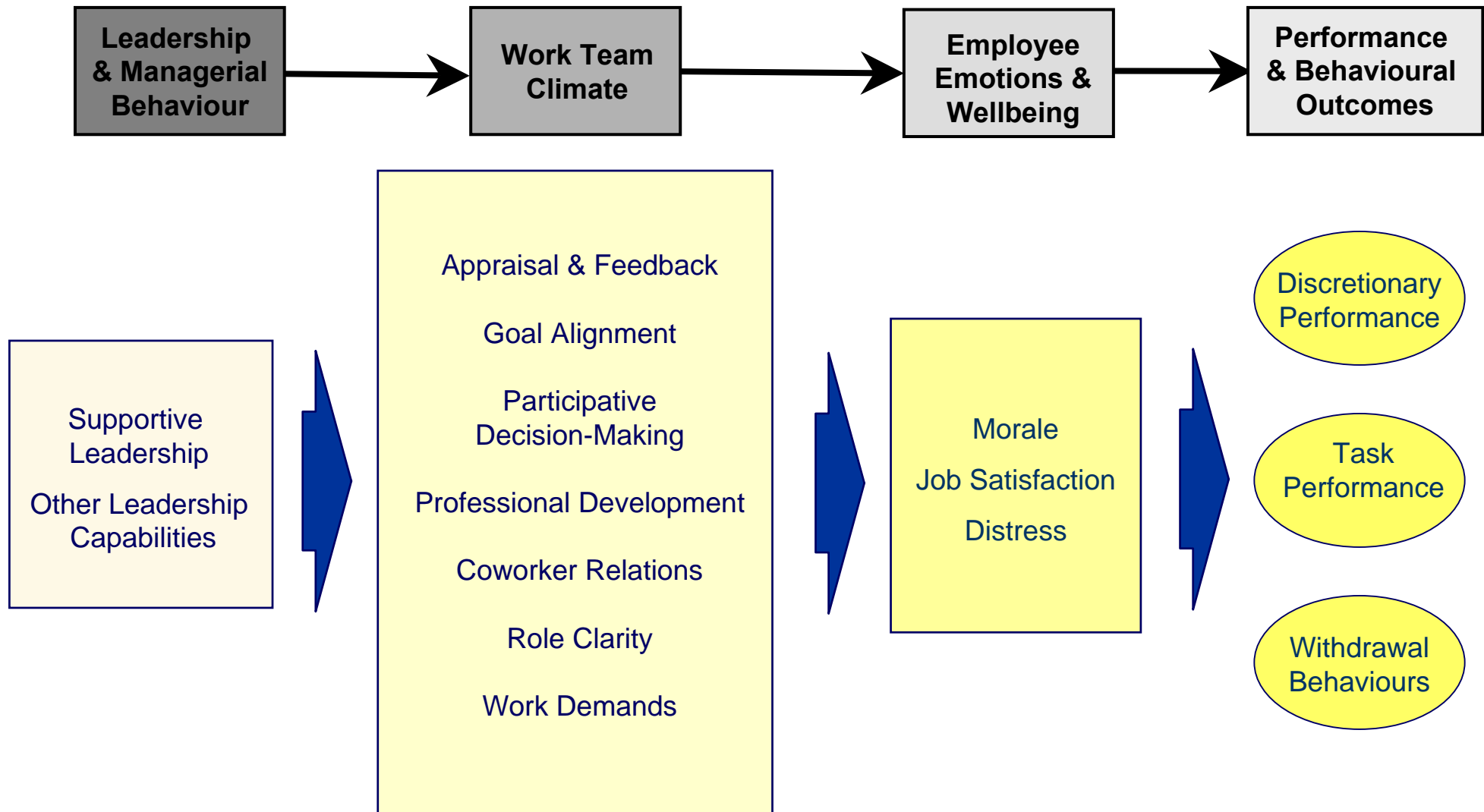
- encourages individual development
- coaches staff
- supports training & development



Supportive Leadership

- delegates effectively
- treats staff with respect
- accessible and approachable
- encourages staff to take initiative
- can be relied on under pressure
- actively seeks the involvement of staff
- understands the problems faced by staff
- proactively addresses staff concerns

Linking Leadership to Wellbeing and Performance



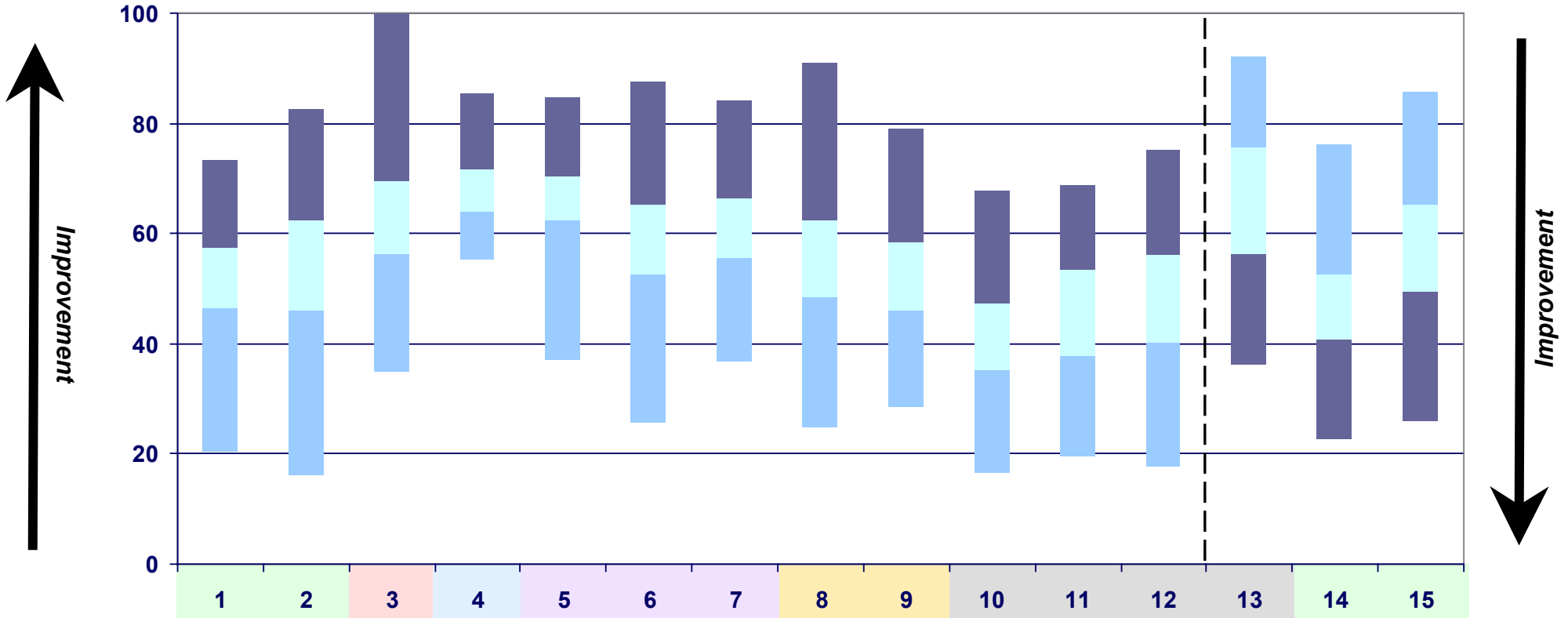
Improving Morale: The Key to Prevention

- ***Higher levels of morale increase resilience and protect employees against the impact of operational stressors***
- ***Levels of morale are strongly influenced by leadership style and work team climate.***

TEAM CLIMATE – 2004

Division XYZ

Comparison to Range of Team Scores (top 25%, middle 50%, lower 25%)



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| High Performing Teams | 1. Individual Morale | 6. Participative Decision-Making | 11. Change Management |
| Average Performing Teams | 2. Team Morale | 7. Goal Alignment | 12. Resources |
| Lower Performing Teams | 3. Supportive Leadership | 8. Appraisal & Recognition | 13. Excessive Work Demands |
| | 4. Role Clarity | 9. Employee Development | 14. Individual Distress |
| | 5. Coworker Interaction | 10. Career Opportunities | 15. Team Distress |

- | | | | | | |
|------------|---------|---------|------------|----------|----------|
| 1-2, 17-18 | 3 | 4 | 5-7 | 8-9 | 10-16 |
| Motivation | Empathy | Clarity | Engagement | Learning | Outcomes |

High People Risk Leadership Styles



Laissez-Faire Style

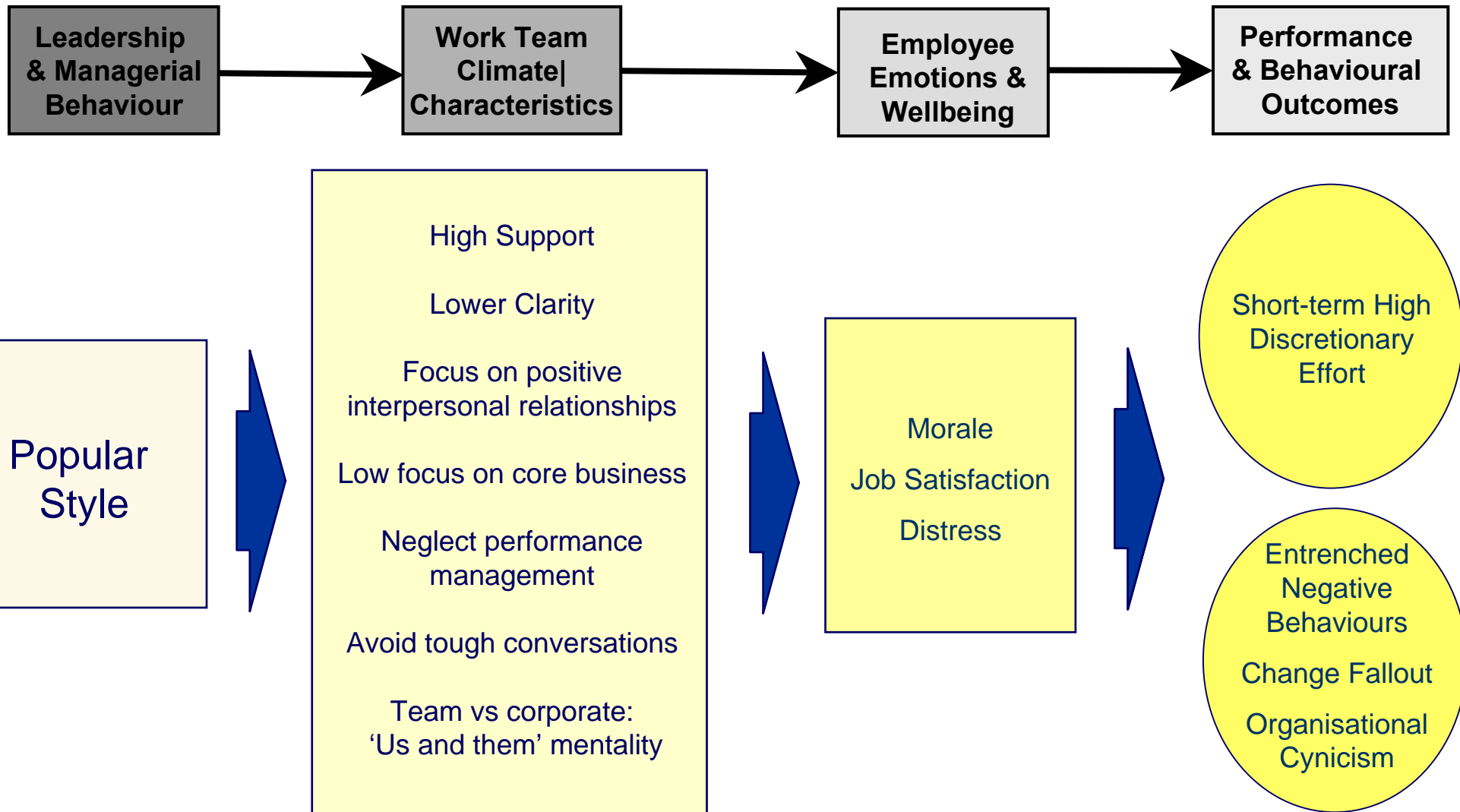
Low Support
Low Clarity
Low Engagement
Don't communicate views about important issues
Neglect Feedback
Fail to follow up on requests for assistance
Avoidance of leadership responsibilities

Morale
Job Satisfaction
Distress

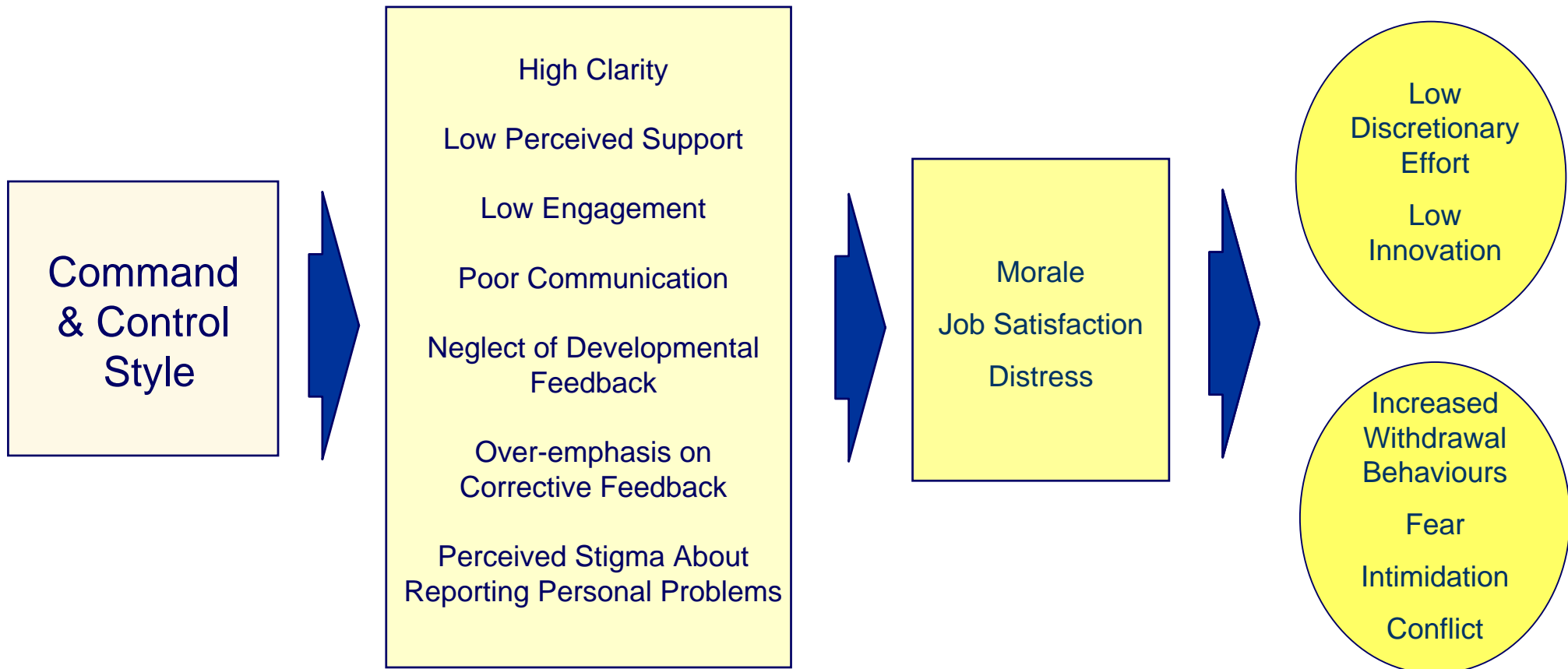
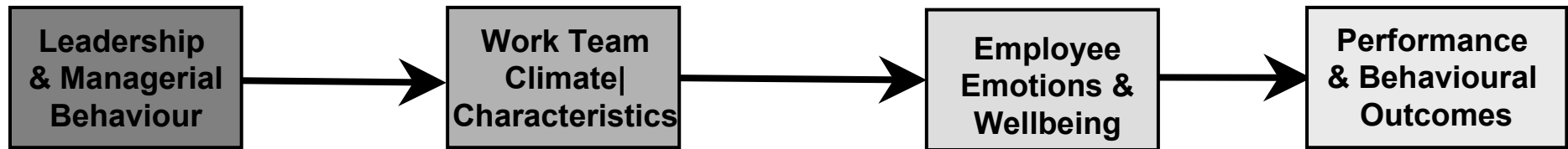
Low Discretionary Effort
Low Performance

Increased Withdrawal Behaviours
Team Dysfunction

High People Risk Leadership Styles



High People Risk Leadership Styles



High People Risk Leadership Styles



Follow-the-Rule
Style

Strong focus on
rules & procedures

Low perceived support

Reactive people focus

High clarity; everything is
black or white

Low engagement

Under pressure, tighten
adherence to the rule

Reluctance to report
problems

Morale

Job Satisfaction

Distress

Low
Discretionary
Effort

Low
Innovation

Increased
Withdrawal
Behaviours

Harassment

Conflict

Review of Psychological Injury Claims

(Preliminary multi-jurisdictional data)

70% Potentially

Preventable:

≤55%—→Increasing supportive leadership capability; improving organisational climate; enhancing and aligning work team people management practices (support, clarity, engagement and learning processes)

≤15%—→Exclusion through recruitment and selection processes

30% Unforeseeable:

≈20%—→Sudden onset - claims management

≈10%—→High functioning and high vulnerability (not apparent prior to onset) – claims management

Evidence-Based Organisational Strategies

Prevention:

- ***Developing supportive leadership capability across all levels of management and increased accountability for people-related outcomes***
- ***Fostering more supportive and engaging work team climates***
- ***Evidence-based culture change programs***
- ***Using high quality measurement (e.g. reliable and valid employee opinion surveys etc) to identify potential organisational 'hot spots'***
- ***Developing the people management skills of frontline managers***

Evidence-Based Organisational Strategies

Early Intervention:

- ***Fostering a ‘care and concern’ early intervention workplace culture: knowledge building and balancing organisational support with appropriate levels of self-responsibility for addressing emerging concerns***
- ***Building early detection capability and manager skills to engage with at-risk employees;***
- ***Fostering early intervention partnerships between managers and suitably skilled employee assistance providers (i.e., psychologists with post graduate clinical training).***

Evidence-Based Organisational Strategies

Treatment and Rehabilitation:

- *Claims management: reducing reporting timeframes, improving the quality of administrative processes and utilising suitably skilled service providers;*
- *Increased workplace support during return to work programs and keeping the injured worker connected to the workplace;*
- *Clinical management: Use of evidence-based and targeted mental health treatments rather than generic support counselling.*